THE CONCEPT DEATH IN THE ENGLISH LINGUISTIC WORLD PICTURE: THE APHORISTIC LEVEL

Ganieva Zukhra Muratbaevna
Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh
ganievazuxra@gmail.com

Annotatsiya. *Tezisda ingliz aforizmlarida DEATH konseptining verballashuvi Z.D. Popova va I.A. Sternin modeli hamda konseptual metafora nazariyasi asosida ko‘rib chiqiladi. XVI–XX asrlar ingliz tilli mualliflariga mansub 45 ta aforizm tahlili konseptning tushunchaviy komponentida umumiylik va muqarrarlik belgilari oldinga chiqishini, yakuniylik belgisi esa inkor etilishini ko‘rsatadi. Obrazli komponent yettita metaforik modelga tayanadi va ular orasida personifikatsiya ustunlik qiladi. Qadriyatli komponentda ijobiy baho ustun bo‘lib, bu frazeologiyadagi salbiy bahoga zid keladi. Aforizm konseptni aksiologik qayta talqin qilish vositasi sifatida baholanadi.*

Kalit so‘zlar: *DEATH konsepti, aforizm, konseptual metafora, olamning lisoniy manzarasi, aksiologik inversiya.*

Аннотация. *В тезисе рассматривается вербализация концепта DEATH в английских афоризмах на основе модели З.Д. Поповой и И.А. Стернина и теории концептуальной метафоры. Анализ 45 афоризмов англоязычных авторов XVI–XX веков показывает, что в понятийном компоненте концепта выдвигаются признаки всеобщности и неизбежности, а признак финальности оспаривается. Образный компонент опирается на семь метафорических моделей при доминировании персонификации. В ценностном компоненте преобладает мелиоративная оценка, противопоставленная негативной оценке во фразеологии. Афоризм рассматривается как средство аксиологического переосмысления концепта.*

Ключевые слова: *концепт DEATH, афоризм, концептуальная метафора, языковая картина мира, аксиологическая инверсия.*

Abstract. *The thesis considers the verbalisation of the concept DEATH in English aphorisms within the model of Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Analysis of 45 aphorisms by English-language authors of the sixteenth to twentieth centuries shows that the notional component foregrounds*

universality and inevitability while the feature of finality is disputed. The image-bearing component rests on seven metaphorical models with personification dominant. The evaluative component is predominantly meliorative, in contrast to the negative evaluation fixed in phraseology. The aphorism is treated as a means of axiological reinterpretation of the concept.

Keywords: *concept DEATH, aphorism, conceptual metaphor, linguistic world picture, axiological inversion.*

Introduction

The concept DEATH is one of the universal existential concepts that every linguoculture verbalises. In Yu.S. Stepanov's terms it is a constant of culture, one of those mental formations that exist as "clots of the cultural environment in human consciousness" and are lived through by the speaker as well as thought [6, c. 40]. The concept also differs from most others in one respect. Its referent lies outside personal experience, since no speaker knows death empirically. N.A. Kolkova, working on Russian proverbial material, shows that the concept is therefore verbalised mainly indirectly: through the scenario of departure, the personified figure of death and the association with sleep [4, c. 10–13].

Such inaccessibility explains why the concept is objectified chiefly by secondary nomination, including euphemisms, phraseological units and metaphors. Among these means the aphorism holds a special position. Analysis of English aphorisms on life and death has shown that the genre, owing to its density and paradoxical form, brings the recipient "to reflection, providing support for his own conclusions" [2, c. 92]. It should be noted, however, that descriptions of the concept DEATH in English have relied mostly on phraseological and euphemistic data. As a result, the aphorism, an authored genre that enters into argument with collective evaluation, has remained at the margin of the analysis. In our view, this gap matters, because the evaluative profile of a concept may depend on the genre that verbalises it.

The aim of the present thesis is to show how English aphoristic discourse represents the three components of the concept DEATH and what their configuration reveals about the axiological function of the genre. The thesis generalises the results of our earlier study [9].

Main part

The study rests on the model of Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin, who define the concept as a discrete mental formation carrying "complex, encyclopedic information

about the reflected object or phenomenon, about the interpretation of this information by the collective consciousness, and about the attitude of the collective consciousness toward the given phenomenon" [5, c. 24]. The model distinguishes a notional, an image-bearing and an evaluative component. V.I. Karasik arrives independently at a comparable structure of the cultural concept [3]. S.A. Askol'dov's early view of the concept as a formation that substitutes for "an indefinite multitude of objects of one and the same kind" [1, c. 269] shows how far the notion has since developed.

Applied to DEATH, the model reveals a disproportion. The notional component contains a small set of features, whereas the evaluative component is heavily loaded. The image-bearing component, since death is closed to perception, consists almost entirely of cognitive images, that is, of metaphorical mappings. The analysis of this layer therefore draws on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which starts from the claim that "human thought processes are largely metaphorical" [13, p. 6]. Z. Kövecses defines a conceptual domain as "any coherent organization of experience" [12, p. 4]. Following A.P. Chudinov, we treat a stable link between two such domains as a metaphorical model of the type "X is Y" [7, c. 64].

The material comprises 45 aphoristic units by 23 British and American authors of the sixteenth to twentieth centuries. They were selected by continuous sampling from The Oxford Book of Death [8], The Oxford Book of Aphorisms [10], The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations [11] and other quotation dictionaries. Aphorisms translated into English from other languages were excluded, since they carry the conceptualisations of other linguocultures.

The notional component. Dictionary definitions give the concept four core features: cessation of life, finality, universality and inevitability. The aphorisms actualise them unevenly. Universality receives the most consistent expression. B. Franklin makes it the only reliable knowledge about the world ("nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes"), and in J. Shirley's "Death lays his icy hand on kings" it acquires a social edge. Inevitability reaches its most compressed form in Ph. Larkin's "Most things may never happen: this one will". Finality, the definitionally central feature, is the one the genre contests most often. J. Donne's "One short sleep past, we wake eternally" denies it outright, and E.M. Forster's "Death destroys a man, the idea of Death saves him" separates the final physical event from its productive mental image. The corpus also adds a feature absent from dictionaries, unknowability, which Hamlet's "undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveller returns" defines through the impossibility of testimony.

Consequently, the aphorism redistributes the notional content of the concept rather than reproducing it.

The image-bearing component. The corpus yields seven metaphorical models, and each of them brings its own cognitive-conceptual feature to the fore.

a) DEATH IS A PERSON, the most productive model, covers about a third of the units. Its feature is agentivity: personification turns an event without an agent into an encounter with someone. The model is realised as a paradigm of social roles. Death appears as a reaper (H.W. Longfellow, "There's a Reaper whose name is Death"), a sovereign with an "icy hand" (Shirley), a courteous suitor (E. Dickinson, "He kindly stopped for me") and an adversary addressed and humiliated (Donne, "Death, be not proud"). G. Herbert's "Death is still working like a mole" is a zoomorphic variant that shifts attention from majesty to unseen, continuous approach.

b) DEATH IS A JOURNEY carries the feature of transition. It is realised in Hamlet's "undiscovered country", in A. Tennyson's sea passage "Crossing the Bar" and in J.M. Barrie's "To die will be an awfully big adventure", where the same mapping receives the opposite evaluation.

c) DEATH IS SLEEP rests on the visible likeness of the sleeping and the dead. In the aphorism it is mostly complicated. Hamlet's "perchance to dream" brings back the unknown, Donne adds the slot of waking, and P.B. Shelley reverses the model so that life becomes the sleep and death the awakening.

d) DEATH IS A KEY (J. Milton, "golden key / That opes the palace of eternity") foregrounds access.

e) DEATH IS A CURE (Th. Browne, "death is the cure of all our diseases") foregrounds relief.

f) DEATH IS A DEBT (W. Shakespeare, "we owe God a death") foregrounds obligation.

g) DEATH IS THE LEVELLER (Th. Gray, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave") foregrounds equality. Its source domain is social rather than physical.

The material supports the account of poetic thought given by G. Lakoff and M. Turner [14]. The aphorism creates almost no new mappings. It elaborates, extends, combines and questions conventional ones, and its axiological effect arises from these transformations.

The evaluative component. We describe the evaluation of DEATH in the corpus on a three-zone scale: negative, neutral-philosophical and positive. The negative zone is the smallest. It includes the biblical "last enemy" and the units

verbalising fear. The neutral zone covers statements of universality and inevitability without evaluative loading, such as Franklin's and Larkin's. The positive zone takes in about half of the corpus. Here death is an adventure (Barrie), a cure (Browne), an awakening (Donne, Shelley) or a kindly caller (Dickinson). W. Whitman's line that dying is "different from what any one supposed, and luckier" may serve as the emblem of the zone. Ironic units (O. Wilde, G.B. Shaw, W. Allen) mock death formally but neutralise its terror, and we therefore count them as positive in function.

This distribution becomes significant when set against phraseology. In our data, 69.7% of English phraseological units denoting death evaluate it negatively [9]. The aphorism reverses this proportion. Since the referent is the same, the difference lies in the genre. Phraseology preserves the collective evaluation of the naive world picture, whereas the aphorism takes that evaluation as its starting point and argues with it. Paradox is the visible form of this axiological inversion: Browne's "we all labour against our own cure" keeps the traditional wording and reverses its value.

Conclusion

The analysis permits the following conclusions. English aphoristic discourse engages all three components of the concept DEATH. In the notional component, universality and inevitability are foregrounded, unknowability is added and finality is disputed. The image-bearing component rests on seven metaphorical models, among which personification dominates. The evaluative component shows a meliorative dominant that no other verbaliser of the concept displays.

Considering the above, we can infer that the evaluative component of the concept is stratified by genre within the English linguistic world picture. Phraseology keeps the inherited negative register, and the aphorism builds a reflective meliorative one over it. An adequate description of the concept has to model this stratification. For the comparative study of DEATH/ЎЛИМ/ӨЛИМ, this raises a further question: whether Uzbek and Karakalpak aphoristic discourse performs the same reinterpretation, or whether the axiological function of the genre is itself culturally variable.

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